

Message Text

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ORIGIN ARA-20

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY PANAMA PRIORITY

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E.O. 11652

TAGS: PN, PFOR

SUBJECT: FOREIGN NEWS EDITOR REQUESTS INTERVIEW WITH
EMBASSY OFFICIAL MONDAY, JUNE 24 OR FOLLOWING DAY

1. STERLING SEAGRAVE, FOREIGN NEWS EDITOR ST. PETERSBURG
TIMES, HAS REQUESTED DEPT. ASSISTANCE IN OBTAINING ON-THE-
RECORD INTERVIEW WITH APPROPRIATE EMBASSY OFFICIAL DURING
VISIT TO PANAMA MONDAY, JUNE 24 AND FOLLOWING DAY. HE
WOULD WELCOME ADDITIONAL REPEAT ADDITIONAL BRIEFING ON
BACKGROUND OR WHOLLY OFF-THE-RECORD ON ANY TOPIC EMBASSY
CARED TO OFFER. DEPT. AGREED TO CONVEY HIS REQUEST AND
ASK EMBASSY TO CONTACT HIM OR LEAVE MESSAGE MONDAY, JUNE
24 AT THE CONTINENTAL HOTEL.

2. SEAGRAVE SEEKS ON-THE-RECORD INTERVIEW AS BASIS FOR
"BROAD BRUSH" STORY HE HOPES TO WRITE ON PANAMA FOLLOWING
HIS VISIT. AREAS IN WHICH HE EXPRESSED INTEREST INCLUDE
FUTURE OF CANAL, OUTLOOK ON SOVEREIGNTY, RECENT AND
CURRENT NEGOTIATIONS.

3. BEFORE LEAVING U.S. JUNE 20 TO COVER LOS CONFERENCE,
SEAGRAVE ASKED PAN EMBASSY WASHINGTON FOR TORRIJOS INTER-
VIEW. HE WAS TOLD THAT WAS VIRTUALLY OUT OF THE QUESTION
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BUT EMBASSY WOULD TRY TO ARRANGE INTERVIEW WITH CARLOS

LOPEZ GUEVERRA, SENIOR MEMBER OF PANAMANIAN NEGOTIATING TEAM.

4. THOUGH FOREIGN NEWS EDITOR, SEAGRAVE COMPENSATES FOR HIS PAPER'S LACK OF OWN FOREIGN CORRESPONDENTS BY DOUBLING AS SUCH ON SEVERAL FOREIGN TRIPS A YEAR. (THIS PROBABLY EXPLAINS HIS EAGERNESS FOR SOMETHING ON-THE-RECORD.) CLAIMS HE HAS WRITTEN PREVIOUSLY ON DEVELOPMENTS IN CANAL NEGOTIATIONS AND "KNOWS THE AREA" (SPECIFICALLY MEXICO AND VENEZUELA "REASONABLY WELL.")

5. SEAGRAVE IS RETURNING TO U.S. VIA PANAMA. HE WILL ARRIVE PANAMA 0628 HOURS MONDAY, JUNE 24 ON PAN AM DIRECT FLIGHT FROM CARACAS. HE PLANS TO STAY CONTINENTAL HOTEL MONDAY NIGHT AT LEAST.

6. DEPT. SUGGESTS THAT EMBASSY (A) RESTRICT ON-THE-RECORD BRIEFING OF SEAGRAVE, IF ANY, TO U.S.-PANAMA BILATERAL RELATIONS, (B) ENCOURAGE AND ASSIST HIM IN OBTAINING ON-THE-RECORD BRIEFINGS ON CANAL NEGOTIATIONS, SOVEREIGNTY ETC FROM PANAMANIAN RATHER THAN EMBASSY SOURCES, AND (C) AT EMBASSY'S DISCRETION PROVIDE BRIEFING ON BACKGROUND OR OFF-THE-RECORD BASIS TO PUT THESE SUBJECTS IN PROPER CONTEXT. KISSINGER

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